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PLA TROOPS OUT OF FACE-OFF SITES

In line with the first phase of the disengagement process from friction points in eastern Ladakh, China's PLA on Thursday completed moving back its troops from the face-off sites in Gogra and Hot Springs, sources said. Meanwhile, the fourth round of Corps Commander-level talks may take place in the next two-three days. **P9**

8 mantris, 8 babus for B'luru Covid fight

To be in charge of all the 8 BBMP zones in the city; Contingency Fund limit enhanced to Rs 500 cr

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa inspects a ward at the Covid Care Centre at BIEC in Bengaluru on Thursday. The centre, which is scheduled to open next week, will be the biggest facility in the country for asymptomatic Covid-19 patients.

ANUSHA RAVI @Bengaluru

STEPPING up efforts to tackle the increasing number of Covid-19 cases in Bengaluru, the State Cabinet on Thursday decided to have ministers in charge of each BBMP zone in the city. It also approved enhancing the Contingency Fund limit to Rs 500 crore in the wake of the pandemic.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister J C Madhuswamy said one minister will be given charge of each of the eight zones to oversee containment measures. By Thursday evening, State Chief Secretary T M Vijaya Bhaskar appointed eight senior IAS officers to take charge of the eight zones. The officials have been empowered to not just supervise Covid-19 containment measures, but also pass orders as they deem fit to arrest the spread of the virus.

Senior IAS officers Tushar Girinath (Bengaluru East), Rajendra Kumar Kataria (West), Captain P Manivannan (Bommanahalli), Navin Raj Singh (Yelahanka), Munish Moudgil (Bengaluru South), Dr N Manjuia (Mahadevapura), Dr P C Jaffer (Dasarahalli) and Dr R Vishal (RR Nagar) have been appointed as executive chiefs. **P7**

Bengaluru Urban reports a spike of 1,373 cases on Thursday

Six cops in Belagavi quarantined after contact with positive suspect

Five patients with HIV recover from Covid-19 in Ballari district

Positive septuagenarian missing from Kalaburagi, traced to Nelamangala

• FULL COVERAGE P4

Door opens for Covid testing by more pvt labs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

TAKING proactive steps to ramp up the Covid-19 testing capacity in the country, the government has decided to allow non-accredited private labs — who apply for accreditation — to carry out diagnostic tests for the viral disease.

With the national test positivity rate crossing 10 — against the WHO recommended guideline of keeping it under 5 in order to contain the outbreak — low testing continues to be a major concern.

Dr Nivedita Gupta, a senior scientist at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), said private labs have now been allowed to apply for National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) accreditation and in parallel submit their application to the ICMR to carry out Covid-19 tests.

"Private labs can complete accreditation in a month. As of today, a total of 1,132 testing labs are operational," she said. At present, more than 2.6 lakh samples are being tested for Covid-19 each day. "TrueNat and CBNAAT tests too have been deployed recently, in addition to RT-PCR and we hope to see a further rise by the use of the antigen test," Dr Gupta added.

Golfers +ve but play

Though three professional golfers continued to test positive for Covid-19, they teed off together at a PGA meet in the US. New rules allow golfers to play if at least 10 days have passed since the symptoms first appeared | **P13**

Early tracing: Board pitches 6-min walk test

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

EVEN as the State Government is ramping up facilities to fight Covid-19, the Karnataka State Planning Board has suggested the 'six-minute walk test' to help identify those at risk before they are tested.

In a report, "Covid-19: Way Forward for Karnataka", prepared after holding 19 rounds of meetings with experts, the board asked the government to emulate the initiative taken up in Wardha, Maharashtra.

"Emulate the six-minute walk test for adults to shortlist those at risk," the report says, among several other suggestions. In Wardha, blood oxygen levels were measured with pulse oximeter after a six-minute walk and those with oxygen levels below 90 per cent were sent for Covid tests. **P4**

Nepal blocks Indian TV channels

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

CABLE TV operators in Nepal on Thursday banned all Indian news channels, except Doordarshan, accusing them of spreading misinformation and defaming their leaders. However, there has been no government order to this effect so far.

Nepal's Minister for Information and Broadcasting Yubaraj Khatiwada said the government would seek political and legal remedies against Indian media for disseminating news that jeopardises the nation, nationality, sovereignty and self-respect of Nepalis.

"We also request not to disseminate news that infringes on the sovereignty and self-respect of Nepalis. This includes the media of neighboring countries. We might seek both political and legal remedies," the minister said.

Nepal-India relations have been on a downward spiral since the Himalayan nation passed a constitutional amendment to include territories of Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura and Kalapani in its new map claiming them under the Treaty of Sugauli.

India, however, maintains that the territories are theirs.

The latest move also comes after a media house claimed that Nepal leaders were honey-trapped by the Chinese Ambassador to Nepal after she met them.

Cop-killer Vikas Dubey finally arrested in Ujjain

ANURAG SINGH & NAMITA BAJPAI @Bhopal/Lucknow

UTTAR Pradesh's most wanted gangster Vikas Dubey, who was on the run after he and his aides allegedly killed eight UP policemen in Kanpur last week in a deadly ambush, was on Thursday nabbed by Ujjain police. He was arrested when he came to offer prayers at the world famous Mahakal Temple on Thursday morning.

Later in the day, a team of UP police led by an Assistant SP of Special task Force reached Ujjain and took the gangster into custody. The UP police team is expected to take Dubey to Kanpur by road.

According to sources, during the initial interrogation by Ujjain police after his arrest, Dubey said he ambushed the police party in Bikru village in Kanpur fearing his own encounter at the hands of cops. He added that he had stored gallons of oil as he had planned to burn the bodies of the cops to destroy evidence. He even collected the bodies at one place, but failed to execute his plan.

Dubey also admitted to having solid links in the police department, sources said.

CONTINUED ON: P10

EXPRESS READ

CICSE Classes 10, 12 results out today

New Delhi: The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CICSE) will announce Classes 10 and 12 results at 3 pm on Friday, the board's secretary said.

PNB discloses ₹3.6k cr fraud in DHFL account

New Delhi: Punjab National Bank on Thursday reported a ₹3,688.58 crore fraud in an NPA account of scandal-hit NBFC Dewan Housing Finance. The disclosure came just hours after the Enforcement Directorate attached the properties of DHFL promoters Kapil and Dheeraj Wadhawan in the Yes Bank fraud case. ENS

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List of BBMP / Government and Private Hospitals are available at www.bbmp.gov.in

General public should compulsorily follow the guidelines and help in preventing the spread of COVID-19

M. Goutham Kumar, Mayor | Ramamohan Raju C.R., Deputy Mayor | Manjunath Raju G., Chairman, Public Health Standing Committee | B.H. Anil Kumar, IAS, Commissioner, BBMP

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